

*NOTES FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH KHUN SUJIN (SEPT 1985)

After the death of my father, I asked K.Sujin some questions about death. I was particularly concerned about helping my family and about thoughts about my father. Past attachment conditions present grief. This is the cause of suffering. The more one can be calm, no matter what happens, the better. I'd been reminded at the time of the funeral that the 'wise do not weep'. Some verses from the Sutta Nipata had been particularly helpful. Although it is apparent that at the moments of having concern and compassion for those around one there is no sorrow, I was confused about whether one could also wish the dead 'being' well and have metta for this 'person'. It seems that it is impossible to have mettā for those who are dead. He/she is not that person anymore and mettā must be for a person. Otherwise it seems that we don't know exactly what it is, but just want to have mettā for that space. Mettā should be for everyone, not just one person as the Visuddhimagga explains. When one thinks about that 'person', it's helpful to ask oneself 'what person?'. While the ex-being cannot appreciate the kindness, those who are near at this moment can. This doesn't mean there can't be wholesome thoughts when we reflect on the virtues or good deeds that person performed.

Having said there cannot be mettā for the dead, it is possible however for others in other planes to appreciate our good deeds if the merit is extended. If they have wholesome cittas, no matter what realm they are in, they can rejoice. We cannot know if this happens though.

If we are sincerely interested in having metta, we must understand first what mettā is. We must understand that it's not hurting or harming the others. It's being friendly with those we see every day. Only by being aware of it's characteristic can we know that this moment is called metta, that moment is called karūna.

This has to be
understood in
the light of
the path, like

Sometimes we think or wonder about how much awareness has or hasn't arisen. We were reminded that it's better to just leave sati to arise and perform its function. Khun sujin said that whilst playing scrabble, for example, she doesn't like to think about sati. It's better to be aware instantly whilst walking home or sitting. Seeing is seeing. It's useful to consider and remind each other about awareness, but don't expect anything or any results...

We had a lot of discussion about different rūpas. I wondered whether subtle rūpas experienced through the mind door can be directly known. For example, hardness and softness are experienced through the body sense and continue on in the process to be the object ^{through} of the mind door. When they are experienced in the mind door process, the 'lightness' of that rūpa can be experienced. We also discussed the rūpa of eye-sense. Khun Sujin stressed that while it's important to understand visible object as not seeing, it depends on the person's accumulations to be aware of other rūpas. She said that there's no need to think or find out whether subtle rūpas can be experienced, for example. We shouldn't try to be aware of 'lightness', eye-sense or any other reality if it doesn't appear. We read more details so that we can become detached when there is awareness of any object. Otherwise there will be just awareness without understanding and detachment from what appears. We shouldn't try to follow what is said in the book. For example, at this moment there's no use in trying to count how many cetasikas arise at the moment of seeing. Only sankhāra dhamma will form up a moment of awareness and detachment now. It depends on conditions and our understanding of paramattha dhammas ~~she~~. Be aware of what appears. Don't think about when other realities will be the objects of awareness. If other realities such as subtle rūpas do appear, the understanding will know that they are different.

We discussed the importance of sound. Khun Sujin said that without sound, no one can become enlightened. The main conditions which form up the sounds and words which we use are vitākka and vicāra cetasikas. Vitākka and vicāra think of different words and sounds in different languages. Saññā remembers. Vitākka and vicāra touch an object for a moment. Without them, the sound would be heard only. It's important to understand sound better. We cling to sound and take what we hear very seriously, forgetting that it is just sound. People clinging to fame, wealth and praise, but really it's just a moment of hearing. However, according to our accumulations, there can be a lot of disturbance and happy/unhappy feeling immediately after the sound is heard. Life is so short, a moment is so short and yet we forget that in reality there is nobody's voice, not mine or his. Knowing more details and understanding how ^{quickly} rūpa arises and falls aware can remind us to be aware and not cling to realities at this moment.

Sometimes our understanding may be hindered by trying to pinpoint what each characteristic or reality is. For example, we were discussing the characteristics of pressure and hardness. Khun Sujin reminded us that we don't have to pinpoint and say this is pressure and this is hardness, but when the characteristic is directly experienced then it is known to be different from another characteristic. Instead of trying to use a lot of terms and finding ^{out} hot in theory how they are different, awareness can be aware of a characteristic which appears. For example, if you use the wrong word or the wrong language, the characteristic may not be wrong. It's not important to determine whether ^{what is being tasted} this is an apple or a potato. It's a matter of understanding the characteristic which is experienced by taste, understanding the object as a reality. There should be awareness of realities which appear. While it is helpful to know there are many other realities, we don't have to think what about understanding these other realities now.

*If one has
not heard in
this life, because
of past贪and
citta*